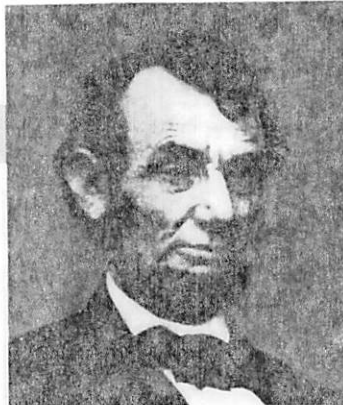




PIERCE
14th President
1853 — 1857



BUCHANAN
15th President
1857 — 1861



Mathew Brady, Library of Congress

ABRAHAM LINCOLN



JOHNSON
17th President
1865 — 1869



GRANT
18th President
1869 — 1877

A. Lincoln

16TH PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES 1861-1865

LINCOLN, ABRAHAM (1809-1865), was one of the truly great men of all time. He preserved the American Union during the Civil War, and proved to the world that democracy can be a lasting form of government. Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, and many of his other speeches and writings, are classic statements of democratic beliefs and goals. In conducting a bitter war, Lincoln never became bitter himself. He showed a nobility of character which continues to grow in world-wide appeal. Lincoln was the first President elected by the Republican party. After his assassination, he was succeeded by Vice-President Andrew Johnson.

The American people knew little about Lincoln when he became President. Nothing in his past experience indicated that he could meet successfully the greatest crisis in the nation's history. He received less than 40 per cent of the popular vote. As President, Lincoln was often a careless, inefficient administrator. At times, he gave way to political pressures which he might better have resisted.

But these failings mattered little when compared with Lincoln's great merits. His outstanding asset was insight. Lincoln realized at the beginning of the Civil War that the Union must be saved. The United States was the only important democracy in the world. Lincoln knew that self-government would be proved a failure if the nation could be destroyed by a minority of its own people. He determined that the nation, and democracy, would not be destroyed.

Lincoln's second great asset was his ability to express his convictions so clearly, and with such force, that millions of his countrymen made them their own. This he did in his first and second inaugural addresses, in his annual messages to Congress, in the Gettysburg Address, and in his letters. Lincoln would have been surprised that some of his speeches came to be honored as great literature. He sought only to be understood, and to convince.

Lincoln's third great source of strength was his iron will. The Civil War had to be carried on until the Union

was restored. At times, people in the North wavered in this purpose. Lincoln never doubted that in the end, right would make might, and the North would triumph. His unyielding faith in victory helped to win victory.

If the Union had not been preserved, the United States would have become two nations. Neither of these nations could have attained the prosperity and importance that the United States has today. Lincoln influenced the course of world history by his leadership of the North during the Civil War. His own life story has perhaps been just as important. He rose from humble origin to the nation's highest office. Millions of persons regard his career as proof that democracy offers all men the best hope of full and free life.

Life in the United States during Lincoln's administration revolved almost entirely around the Civil War. To raise money to fight the war, Congress levied the first income tax in the history of the country. For the first time, federal officeholders had to take an oath of loyalty to the Union. Pioneers flocked to the western frontier, and mining towns sprang up overnight. The government gave free farms to settlers, and set aside land for colleges that later became state universities.

Soldiers and civilians alike sang "The Battle Hymn of the Republic" or "Dixie." Winslow Homer's painting *Prisoners from the Front* brought him his first fame. Patriotic literature included John Greenleaf Whittier's poem "Barbara Frietchie" and Edward Everett Hale's story "The Man Without a Country." Lincoln and thousands of other Americans chuckled at the humorous writings of Artemus Ward.

Early Life

Family Background. Soon after Lincoln was nominated for the presidency, he wrote an autobiography. It began: "Abraham Lincoln was born Feb. 12, 1809, then in Hardin, now in the more recently formed county of Larue, Kentucky. His father, Thomas, & grandfather Abraham, were born in Rockingham county Virginia, whither their ancestors had come from Berks county Pennsylvania. His lineage has been traced no farther back than this."

Since Lincoln's time, his ancestry has been traced to a weaver named Samuel Lincoln who emigrated from

Lincoln's Favorite Photograph served as the model for this painting by Allen Tupper True. The portrait is in the Huntington Library and Art Gallery in San Marino, Calif.

- 1809** (Feb. 12) Born near present-day Hodgenville, Ky.
- 1834** Elected to the Illinois General Assembly.
- 1842** (Nov. 4) Married Mary Todd.
- 1846** Elected to the U.S. House of Representatives.
- 1858** Debated slavery with Stephen A. Douglas.
- 1860** (Nov. 6) Elected President of the United States.
- 1864** (Nov. 8) Re-elected President.
- 1865** (April 14) Shot by John Wilkes Booth.
- 1865** (April 15) Died in Washington, D.C.

Hingham, England, to Hingham, Mass., in 1637. This was only 17 years after the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth Rock. Samuel Lincoln founded the Lincoln family in America. The families of several of his children played important parts in Massachusetts history.

Descendants of Mordecai Lincoln, a son of Samuel, moved to New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Virginia. One was a great-great-grandson named Abraham. This Abraham Lincoln was the grandfather of the future President. He owned a farm in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia during the Revolutionary War. In 1782, he and his wife and five small children started over the long trail to the wilderness of Kentucky. An Indian killed him there in 1786.

One of his sons, Thomas Lincoln, became the father of the future President. In later years, the President said his father was "a wandering laboring boy, and grew up literally without education." Thomas Lincoln worked as a frontier farm hand during most of his youth. But he learned enough skill at woodworking to earn a living as a carpenter. In 1806, when he was 28 years old, he married Nancy Hanks. Nancy came from what her son described as an "undistinguished" Virginia family of humble, ordinary people. Historians know only that she was the daughter of a Lucy Hanks.

Thomas and Nancy Lincoln lived in Elizabethtown, Ky., for the first 18 months of their marriage. Their first child, Sarah, was born there in 1807. The next year, Thomas Lincoln bought a farm on the South Fork of the Nolin River, about 5 miles (8 kilometers) south of Elizabethtown. Abraham Lincoln was born on this farm.

Boyhood. The Lincolns lived for two years on the farm where Abraham was born. Then they moved to a farm on Knob Creek, 10 miles (16 kilometers) away. When Sarah and Abraham could be spared from their chores, they went to a log schoolhouse. There the children learned reading, writing, and arithmetic.

Many persons believe that because Lincoln began his life in a log cabin, he was born in poverty. But many families lived in log cabins during the early 1800's. The Lincolns were as comfortable as most of their neighbors, and Abraham and Sarah were well fed and well clothed for the times. A third child, Thomas, died in infancy.

Thomas Lincoln had trouble over property rights throughout his years in Kentucky. In 1816, he decided to move to Indiana, where a man could buy land directly from the government. Besides, Thomas Lincoln did not believe in slavery, and Indiana had no slavery.

The Lincolns loaded their possessions into a wagon. They traveled northward to the Ohio River and were ferried across. Then they traveled through the thick forests to Spencer County, in southwestern Indiana. There, Thomas Lincoln began the task of changing 160 acres (65 hectares) of forest land into a farm.

BOYHOOD YEARS



Brown Bros.

Lincoln's Birthplace, a log cabin near Hodgenville, Ky., may have been the cabin that now stands at the Abraham Lincoln Birthplace National Historic Site, above.

Travels of the Lincolns took them to Knob Creek, Ky., in 1811, then to Indiana in 1816, and to Illinois in 1830. Lincoln moved on his own to New Salem, Ill., in 1831.

The Lincolns found life harder in Indiana than in Kentucky. They arrived early in winter, and needed shelter at once. Thomas and his son built a three-sided structure made of logs, called a "half-faced camp." A fire on the fourth side burned night and day. Soon after finishing this shelter, the boy and his father began to build a log cabin. The family moved into it in mid-February, 1817.

Bears and other wild animals roamed the forests of this remote region. Trees had to be cut and fields cleared so that a crop could be planted. Although Abraham was only 8, he was large for his age and had enough strength to swing an ax. For as long as he lived in Indiana, he was seldom without his ax. He later called it "that most useful instrument."

Slowly, life became happier on the farm. Then, in October, 1818, Nancy Lincoln died of what the pioneers called "milk sickness." This illness was probably caused by poison in the milk of cows that had eaten snakeroot. Thomas buried his wife among the trees on a hill near the cabin. The lack of a funeral service distressed 9-year-old Abraham. He was not content until a traveling preacher conducted a burial service over his mother's grave several months later.

The cabin became dull and cheerless after the death of Nancy Lincoln. Sarah, now 12, kept house as well as she could for more than a year. Then Thomas Lincoln returned to Kentucky for a visit. While there, on Dec. 2, 1819, he married Sarah Bush Johnston, a widow. He had known her before her first marriage. The new Mrs. Lincoln brought along her three children, aged 12, 8, and 5, and a wagonload of furniture and household goods. Her arrival at the cabin in Indiana ended the long months of loneliness. Years later, Abraham Lincoln remembered little about his own mother. He may have referred to his stepmother when he said: "God bless my mother; all that I am or ever hope to be I owe to her."

Education. Abraham Lincoln grew from a boy of 7 to a man of 21 on the wild Indiana frontier. His education can best be described in his own words:

"There were some schools, so called; but no qualification was ever required of a teacher, beyond *'readin, writin, and cipherin,'* to the Rule of Three. If a straggler



Abraham Helped Build a Cabin when the family moved to Indiana. Lincoln's mother died on this isolated frontier farm in 1818.

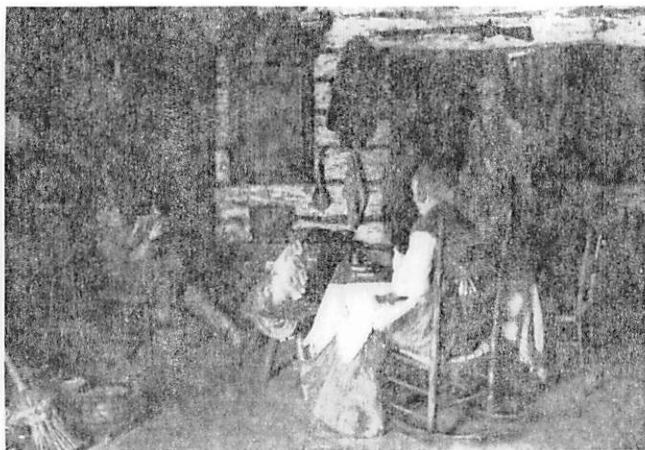
supposed to understand latin, happened to sojourn in the neighborhood, he was looked upon as a wizzard. There was absolutely nothing to excite ambition for education. Of course when I came of age I did not know much. Still somehow, I could read, write, and cipher to the Rule of Three; but that was all."

Lincoln's formal schooling totaled less than a year. Books could rarely be found on the frontier, and paper was almost as scarce. Like other boys and girls of his time, Lincoln made his own arithmetic textbook. Several pages of this book still exist. Abraham often worked his arithmetic problems on boards, then shaved the boards clean with a drawknife, and used them again and again. He would walk a great distance for a book. The few he could borrow were good ones. They included *Robinson Crusoe*, *Pilgrim's Progress*, *Aesop's Fables*, a history of the United States, and a schoolbook or two.

In 1823, when Abraham was 14, his parents joined the Pigeon Creek Baptist Church. There was bitter rivalry among Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians, and members of other denominations. Young Lincoln disliked any display of bitterness among Christian people. This may explain why he never joined any church, and why he never attended church regularly. Yet he became a man of deep religious feelings. The Bible was probably the only book his parents ever owned. Abraham came to know it thoroughly. Biblical references and quotations enriched his later writings and speeches. As President, he kept a Bible on his desk and often opened it for comfort and guidance.

Another book also impressed the boy deeply, and led him to an understanding of the meaning of democracy. He told about it years later in a speech before the New Jersey Senate:

"May I be pardoned if, on this occasion, I mention that away back in my childhood, the earliest days of my being able to read, I got hold of a small book, such a one as few of the younger members have ever seen, Weems' *Life of Washington*. I remember all the accounts there given of the battle fields and struggles for the liberties of the country . . . and you all know, for you have all been boys, how these early impressions last longer than any others. I recollect thinking then, boy even though I was, that there must have been some-



Lincoln Studied by Firelight after working on the farm all day. This diorama, or three-dimensional scene, shows Lincoln and his parents in their log cabin on the Indiana frontier.

The Family Crossed into Illinois in 1830, and settled on a farm about 10 miles (16 kilometers) from Decatur. On the way, Abraham rescued a dog trapped in an icy stream.

Dioramas at the Chicago Historical Society





Painting by Herbert D. Stitt; Courtesy National Park Service

President-Elect Lincoln arrived in Washington, D.C., secretly. He had cut short a tour of Eastern cities because detective Alan Pinkerton, left, learned of an assassination plot.

background could be counted on to arouse great enthusiasm among the voters.

On the first ballot, Seward received 173½ votes, Lincoln 102, and Chase 49. Lincoln gained the support of Pennsylvania and Indiana on the second ballot, and received 181 votes to 184½ for Seward. During the third ballot, Lincoln continued to gain strength. Before the result was announced, Ohio switched four votes from Chase to Lincoln. This gave Lincoln more than the 233 votes needed to win the nomination. The delegates nominated Senator Hannibal Hamlin of Maine for Vice-President.

Like other presidential candidates of his period, Lincoln felt it was undignified to campaign actively. He stayed quietly in Springfield during the election campaign. His followers more than made up for his inactivity. The Democratic party broke into two factions, which helped Lincoln immensely. Senator Douglas, the nation's leading Democrat, had angered the proslavery wing of his party. Northern Democrats nominated him

LINCOLN'S FIRST ELECTION

Place of Nominating Convention	Chicago
Ballot on Which Nominated	3rd
Northern Democratic Opponent	Stephen A. Douglas
Southern Democratic Opponent	John C. Breckinridge
Constitutional Union Opponent	John Bell
Electoral Vote	180 (Lincoln) to: 72 (Breckinridge) 39 (Bell) 12 (Douglas)
Popular Vote	1,865,593 (Lincoln) to: 1,382,713 (Douglas) 848,356 (Breckinridge) 592,906 (Bell)
Age at Inauguration	52

for President. The Southern faction of the Democratic party chose Vice-President John C. Breckinridge. A fourth party, calling itself the Constitutional Union party, nominated former Senator John Bell of Tennessee.

Lincoln won election easily, receiving 180 electoral votes to 72 for Breckinridge, 39 for Bell, and 12 for Douglas. But more Americans voted against Lincoln than for him. The people gave him 1,865,593 votes, compared to a combined total of 2,823,975 for his opponents. All Lincoln's electoral votes, and nearly all his popular votes, came from the North.

Lincoln's Administration (1861-1865)

The South Secedes. Events moved swiftly in the South during the months before Lincoln's inauguration. Many Southern leaders had threatened to withdraw their states from the Union if Lincoln should win the election. On Dec. 20, 1860, South Carolina passed an Ordinance of Secession that declared the Union dissolved as far as that state was concerned. By the time Lincoln became President, six other Southern States had seceded. Four more followed later. The seceded states organized themselves into the Confederate States of America. See CONFEDERATE STATES OF AMERICA.

First Inauguration. Lincoln said farewell to his Springfield neighbors on Feb. 11, 1861. He parted with these words: "Here I have lived a quarter of a century, and have passed from a young to an old man. Here my children have been born, and one is buried. I now leave, not knowing when, or whether ever, I may return, with a task before me greater than that which rested upon Washington. Without the assistance of that Divine Being who ever attended him, I cannot succeed. With that assistance I cannot fail."

The long train trip to Washington, D.C., had been carefully planned to include stops at most large Eastern cities. This allowed many thousands of persons to see the man who would be their next President. In Philadelphia, Lincoln heard a report of an assassination plot. In Harrisburg, Pa., his advisers persuaded him to cut short his trip. Lincoln continued in secret to Washington, arriving early on the morning of February 23.

HIGHLIGHTS OF LINCOLN'S ADMINISTRATION

1861 (April 12) The Civil War began.
1861 (April 27) Lincoln proclaimed a blockade of Southern ports.
1861 (July 21) Confederate forces won the first Battle of Bull Run.
1862 (April 6-7) Union troops won the Battle of Shiloh.
1862 (April 16) Congress abolished slavery in the District of Columbia.
1862 (May 20) Congress approved the Homestead Act.
1862 (Sept. 17) Union forces won the Battle of Antietam.
1862 (Sept. 22) Lincoln issued a preliminary proclamation of emancipation.
1862 (Dec. 13) The Union suffered a terrible defeat at Fredericksburg.
1863 (Jan. 1) Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation.
1863 (July 1-3) Union armies won the Battle of Gettysburg.
1863 (July 4) Vicksburg, Miss., fell to Union forces.
1863 (Nov. 19) Lincoln delivered the Gettysburg Address.
1864 (March 9) Grant took command of all Union armies.
1864 (Sept. 2) Sherman's army captured Atlanta, Ga.
1865 (April 9) The Civil War ended.